

Feedback Report and Implementation Plan

Respected Sir Dr Mohammad Shabbir Awan, CEO, Path Finder Solutions.

I am very grateful to you for giving me the opportunity to learn so much from the recent workshop. After training I came to know about **Internet Governance** which has a great **ecosystem**. The focus being on the **end user**. For me, it was also a confirmation that the vision and the project I am working on are totally in line with the **prevalent policy approach** regarding Internet Governance.

My project focuses on the deaf, who are basically **visual learners** and **spatial awareness** plays an important role in their **cognitive functions**. **Universality** and **simplicity** of design, and **accessibility** should be the **main principles** to be considered when developing **ICT products** and **services** for the deaf. These are the key concepts which can provide **equal learning opportunities** and pathways to the deaf. Developing **multi-stakeholders'** platform can be **mutually beneficial** for all, **inclusive** of **government policy makers, NGOs, related industrial groups and vendors**, can help promote the **rights and interests of PWDs**.

UNCRPD and SDGs have played a major role in implementing the principle of '**nothing about us without us**' and the slogan, '**leave no one behind**' can help ensure **optimum involvement** of the PWDs in shaping and developing **Internet Protocols** so that the PWDs can obtain **maximum benefit** and **grow actively** in a **digital environment**.

Implementation Plan:

Before we plan, develop and implement the appropriate Internet Protocols for the deaf, we must consider some key factors influencing their ability/inability to learn. The foremost is a lack of Early Childhood Intervention strategies and protocols available to the deaf adult which leads to the loss of crucial developmental years. It is easier to teach a 2-year-old deaf child than a 20-year-old deaf adult. This means that we need to adopt separate approach when planning IG strategies for the adult and the child.

Adult Deaf:

- Due to lack of training during early childhood, language skills (reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary) are very weak. A deaf with a BA degree finds it hard to understand a complete sentence. They may know the words but not the correlation.
- They are taught 50-55% of the curriculum in schools and colleges.
- They develop a visual learning psyche due to weak language skills.
- Hearing impairment effects their memorizing of lessons taught.
- They need repetitive learning.
- They have short attention spans. Lengthy textual content frustrates them and they have trouble understanding.
- They have the ability to learn if taught with the proper approach based on their specific learning psyche and pace.

Implementation: Way to go!

- Visual Learning. Video Tutorials, Animations.
- Focus on vocabulary instead of signs. They should not just learn sign language BUT learn IN sign language. There is a major difference in the teaching approach which should be considered when developing educational program/courses.
- A digital library of Lesson Plans available for constant revision.

- Gather educational data (syllabus, exam papers) for computer courses being taught in respective schools/organizations.
- Importance of evaluation of computer literacy level before developing ICT based course curriculum.
- Designing pre-requisite courses according to evaluation.
- Focus on digital skills instead of conventional education.
- Tests and exams should be evaluated on hands on practical basis.
- A digital portfolio of students being taught should be maintained to monitor learning outcomes.
- Online tutorials, courses on Personality Development and Life Skills.
- Beginner to mid and advanced level ecommerce courses based on performance and evaluation. High achievers can be provided with opportunities to teach other deaf, as they understand the deaf learning psyche better.
- Online courses should be standardized so that useful statistical data may be generated and used for future modifications and improvement.
- Deaf are good in arts and if properly trained in IT, can shine as Graphic Designers.
- Coding too, is a form of sign language, with well-designed courses compatible with the learning psyche and pace of the deaf, the deaf can be trained as coders.

It is important to understand that with the right teaching strategy, the deaf have the potential to learn anything. Special ICT curriculum should be developed for schools starting from class one with goal-oriented syllabus till Matric. The curriculum of the Special Education degree also needs a revamp to improve and extend the syllabus concerning the deaf. We must recognize the fact that the deaf lack auditory input which sets them aside from other disabilities and negatively effects their cognitive abilities and vocabulary. The focus in education of the deaf should be on Visual Learning.

ICT Courses in Vocational/ Business Skills:

It would be worth the while to conduct a survey of available online business opportunities and marketable online skills and a portal developed accordingly to provide a platform to the deaf. This would also help design courses accordingly for the skills in demand.

Other areas:

1. Interpreter Training/ Services
2. Deaf Educators Training
3. Parents awareness programs/workshops
4. Women empowerment programs/workshops.
Special attention needs to be given to the deaf women in particular as their exposure to the outside world is minimal. The Internet provides them with opportunities to connect and learn.
5. Public awareness
6. I am working on facts and suggestions for special education degrees programs to adaptation according to real learning needs of the deaf.
7. Currently I am working on an app design and content which provides access to Internet resources relevant to the deaf community and also a portal for educational, business and social activities. The content is mostly in video format and sign language. It will also have voice in Urdu and content and captioning in English for the hearing user (family and hearing mentors of the deaf) general but

needy information for deaf in sign language. The use of English content and captions is meant to provide a universal utility to the app.

8. Through this app the deaf would have access to latest technology and products and learning tools and opportunities.
9. I plan to start a series of workshops on site for deaf women on Scope of the Internet in the Current Digital World, stressing on the educational and business opportunities it provides. Workshops on Personality Development and Life Skills. The same would be provided in digital form on my social media pages.
10. Through personal efforts I have generated a variety of digital content for the deaf and shared it on social media, this includes 100 plus videos, tutorials and lectures and stories for deaf children. I also collaborate with NGOs to conduct workshops and lectures to spread awareness among the deaf.

B: Implementation plan for New born Deaf

- I. Spread awareness about and importance of newborn hearing screening on related platforms.
- II. Treatment planning/Early Childhood Intervention protocols based on advice from the audiologist and medical specialists in the field. Because every hearing impairment is not complete deafness, the hard of hearing can be educated with hearing students after ECI treatment/training.
- III. Counseling and training of parents for ECI.
- IV. Montessori training after ECI which will lead to school education
- V. School education curriculum will be specific and goal-oriented and will lead to diploma course in that skill.

Who am I?

Name:	Shazia Munawar (also known as Shazia Gulzar)
Disability:	Profound Sensorineural Hearing Loss
Education:	MSc in Microbiology
Experience and skills:	Deaf education consultant, monitoring and evaluation-based curriculum and lesson plan creator for deaf, basic MS-office, basic adobe photoshop, basic adobe premiere, basic adobe after effects.
Handicrafts Skills:	Cutting and stitching, fabric weaving basic, porcelain flower making, candle work, crochet, hand embroidery.

I was fortunate enough to be given an opportunity to experience the inclusive education system till completing my MSc. and later on, the Deaf Education system, as a teacher of the deaf and vocational manager at Deaf Reach and other NGOs. This experience empowered me with a deep insight into the dynamics of the prevalent approach towards deaf education in Pakistan. My observations helped me develop an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses. Above all my own efforts in life and my close interaction with the deaf community as a teacher and mentor, has convinced me of the inherent potential of our youth and I feel confident that with the right approach and proper ICT tools we can develop an IT educational and training program that can bring hope and promise of a brighter future to the deaf.

In-Sha-Allah